

Virginia Board of Counseling

Guidance on Technology-Assisted Counseling and Technology-Assisted Supervision

The Board's regulations for Standards of Practice (18VAC115-20-130) are prefaced by the following:

*The protection of the public health, safety, and welfare and the best interest of the public shall be the primary guide in determining the appropriate professional conduct of all persons whose activities are regulated by the board. **Regardless of the delivery method, whether in person, by phone or electronically, these standards shall apply to the practice of counseling.***

Therefore, the standards of practice set forth in section 130 of the regulations and in the Code of Virginia apply regardless of the method of delivery. The Board of Counseling recommends the following when a licensee uses technology-assisted counseling as the delivery method:

1. Counseling is best in the traditional sense, in person in a face-to-face relationship, in the same room. Counseling may be continued using technology-assisted means after *it* is initiated in a traditional setting. *Counseling that from the outset is delivered in a technology-assisted manner is less than desirable in that issues of the counseling relationship, client identity and other issues may be compromised.*
2. *The counselor must take steps to protect client confidentiality and security.*
3. The counselor *should seek training or otherwise demonstrate* expertise in the use of technology-assisted devices, especially in the matter of protecting confidentiality and security.
4. *When working with a client who is not in Virginia*, counselors are advised to check the regulations of the state board in which the client is located. It is important to be mindful that certain states prohibit counseling by an individual who is unlicensed by that state.
5. Counselors must follow the same code of ethics for technology-assisted counseling as they do in a traditional counseling setting.

Guidance for Technology-assisted Supervision

The Board of Counseling recommends the following when a licensee uses technology-assisted supervision:

1. Supervision of counseling is best in the traditional sense, in person in a face-to-face relationship, in the same room. Supervision may be continued using technology-assisted means after *it* is initiated in a traditional setting. *Supervision that from the outset is delivered in a*

technology-assisted manner is less than desirable in that issues of the supervisory relationship, client identity and other issues may be compromised.

2. *The counselor must take steps to protect supervisee confidentiality and security.*
3. The counselor *should seek training or otherwise demonstrate* expertise in the use of technology-assisted devices, especially in the matter of protecting supervisee confidentiality and security.
4. Counselors must follow the same code of ethics for technology assisted supervision as they do in a traditional counseling/supervision setting.
5. The Board of Counseling governs the practice of counseling in Virginia. Counselors who are working with a client *who is not in Virginia* are advised to check the regulations of the state board in which a *supervisee is located*. It is important to be mindful that certain states *may regulate or prohibit supervision* by an individual who is unlicensed by that state.